



# The Human Touch

[www.hs.utah.gov](http://www.hs.utah.gov)

Number2, 2003

TOGETHER WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE



**Mike Conn, DHS Manager of The Year, surrounded by DHS Director Robin Arnold-Williams and Youth Corrections Director Blake Chard**

## *From Robin's Pen* **Mike Solves Problems Fast**

Mike Conn, who created Decker Lake Youth Center's sex offender program, is the Department of Human Services' Manager of the Year. He has done an incredible job of making decisions, solving problems and, perhaps more importantly, keeping little problems from becoming big ones.

A Youth Corrections employee, Mike recently left Decker Lake to become an auditor in quality control.

Finalist Mark Payne began his career at Utah State Hospital in 1975 as an intern. He has been superintendent for 10 years and also served briefly as interim Mental Health Director.

Both exemplify the great work managers do throughout Human Services.

Mike displayed exemplary leadership in promoting team development. He encourages staff growth, has open lines of communication and encourages employees to talk openly about all issues.

Mike's biggest strength is he constantly researches and looks for new ways to improve the quality of care that residents receive. He frequently talks to residents about their progress and their ability to work with various employees.

"Mike has been approachable, reliable, fun, up-front, and most of all, honest in his dealings with me," said the employee who nominated him.

Staff and resident safety is another top priority for Mike who realizes that the progress residents make halts if their living center isn't safe for everyone.

"Mark Payne is a true leader," one of his managers said in the nomination letter. "He has been the driving force of the hospital as the superintendent and even before," said another employee. "His first concern is for the patients of the hospital. He will never take the easy way out." A highlight of Mark's leadership is that the way he has handled the budget has been nothing short of just terrific.

If you haven't already done so, please congratulate Mike and Mark for a job well done.

## **Marti Lin Bown...**

Marti Lin Bown, pictured with Lt. Gov. Olene Walker was a semifinalist in the Utah Employee of the Year competition.

She spends many hours helping people impacted by domestic violence.

Her determination to educate and inform her community has resulted in many programs, trainings and workshops.



## Brent Johnson: The Accidental Therapist

By Carol Sisco

### DHS Public Information

Brent Johnson grew up shooting pool in a Garfield bar. It seemed like a pretty good life. Later his family opened the Highway Cafe and Garfield Club in Magna. Johnson went off to college, nearly flunked out, switched his major to sociology and the bartender turned counselor.

Johnson, a licensed clinical social worker, took over the Human Services' Employee Assistance Program in 1994 after running similar programs at both Kennecott and American Express for 19 years.

"My job is to be honest, candid, do everything possible to help employees solve problems and to feel good about themselves," Johnson said.

The philosophy behind employee assistance programs is simple: few people get through life without facing personal problems. And few can totally prevent problems from affecting work performance.

Human Services recognizes that a wide range of medical, behavioral and personal problems not directly related to work can affect job performance. However, many can be resolved if identified early.

"I'll take on anything," Johnson said. "I deal with any kind of issues or problems that can affect a human being, not just counseling."

Employees ask Johnson for help on finding a divorce attorney, on child custody issues and one even asked him to find a missing child. While he doesn't have all the answers, he has a huge list of people who can help.

Johnson is housed at the DHS administration building in Salt Lake City, but he regularly travels to offices throughout the Wasatch Front and will visit other areas of the state upon request. He also works with employees by telephone and on e-mail.

Johnson generally gets about 400 new referrals a year.

Johnson handles crisis intervention, will provide brief therapy if needed or refer the individual to more specialized care.

"The first time someone comes in my major role is to learn what the employee's perception of

the problem is," he said, "then we figure out what the problem really is. The problem they present isn't the real one about 60 percent of the time."

Johnson listens to the employee's concerns, talks to them about what he thinks the issue is and discusses their problem-solving skills. If brief therapy is needed, he does it. If they need long-term help, he suggests referrals.

"I find someone for them who understands the problem, is convenient to their home and work and who will see them outside of work hours," Johnson said. "I also try to find someone the person will be comfortable with."

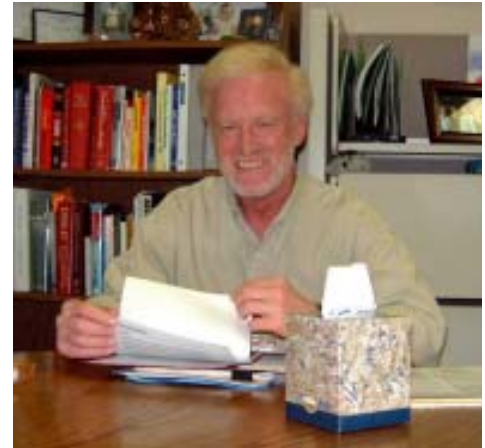
If an employee is referred, Johnson's job is "to make that transition as seamless as possible."

Johnson knows a wide range of therapists. If the employee wants him to, he'll also call the therapist and tell them what his assessment of the issues is. He also makes sure the employee understands how much their insurance will pay for the services. He also knows doctors, attorneys and others who can help.

Everything Johnson does is confidential. No one ever sees his files.

"If people can't look at me and say that is someone I can trust, they won't call or come in the door. They shouldn't either," he said. "Employee assistance programs can't function unless they are open and trustworthy."

If you want to see Johnson, call him at (801) 538-4216 or email him at [brentjohnson@utah.gov](mailto:brentjohnson@utah.gov). Or just stop by his office in Room 427 of the administration building. If the door's open, walk in.



**Brent Johnson**

# **‘Techie’ Brian Whitesides Is On A Roller Coaster**

**By Rich Rayl, Webmaster**

Brian Whitesides’ day at work is never quite the same. One day he may hunt down and eradicate a computer virus, the next he restores an important file that someone has mistakenly deleted. While Whitesides admits his environment can be stressful at times, he still enjoys his job. “It can be a roller coaster ride, that’s for sure,” Whitesides said with a grin.

Whitesides is a Local Area Network (LAN) administrator for the DHS Office of Technology. He is part of the product support team responsible for keeping our networks, printers and computers running smoothly.

“I’ve always loved computers,” Whitesides said. With years of training and experience, he is more than able to handle anything customers throw at him.

“I can never seem to stump him,” said Mike Thompson in the Division of Child and Family Services.

Whitesides has been with DHS about 4 years. Before that he worked as a network administrator for Raycore, a company that builds network cards.

Whitesides’ nature suits him perfectly for the job. He has a jovial yet gentle personality that seems to put his customers at ease.

“He always smiles and says hello,” said Michelle Morris, who works in the DHS administration building.

Job satisfaction comes from simply helping people out, “and I get to work with computers,” Whitesides said with a soft laugh that comes easily and often.

Whitesides says that a more difficult part of his job is walking the fine line between offering great customer service and enforcing some necessary rules to keep the network and PCs healthy.

“Right now we have this weather bug program going around,” he said, referring to a program that delivers streaming weather to your desktop. “It really eats up network resources. I go ahead and



**Brian Whitesides: always fixing computers**

remove programs like these, but I let the customer know why.”

Whitesides’ day begins by logging on to “Remedy,” a computer system that records and tracks all tech-related problems within the DHS as well as other state agencies. “The first step to getting your problem resolved is by opening a ticket,” Whitesides noted.

Each reported problem logged in Remedy is called a ticket.

You open a ticket by calling the help desk at (801) 538-3440 or (800) 678-3440 or by going on-line to <http://its.utah.gov/services/support/helpdesk.htm>. If the need is urgent, specifying so results in a faster response time.

Whitesides explained that Remedy ensures no problem goes without attention, and every ticket gets taken care of in a timely manner.

“The ticket system also helps us better manage scarce technical resources,” Office of Technology Director Sue Martell said. “We can assign resources where they are most needed because we know how many tickets each administrator receives. We also can address customer satisfaction issues early.”

After reviewing and prioritizing the 11 tickets in his queue, Whitesides calls the Office of Services Review where Aaron Bettinson is quite distressed

Continued on page 7



## Volunteers: People Helping People



**Long-time volunteer Sonnie Yudell**

### **Sonnie Yudell Started Volunteering 24 Years Ago and Never Stopped**

**By Elizabeth Sollis, Aging**

Twenty-nine years ago Sonnie Yudell left Brooklyn, N.Y. to make a new life for herself in Salt Lake City. After getting married and starting a family, circumstances changed and, as a single mother, pregnant with her second child, Sonnie decided to attend a free workshop at the Women's Resource Center. Sonnie discovered her passion for volunteering there.

Yudell noticed the Women's Resource Center needed clerical assistance and immediately began volunteering for them – typing, filing, answering phones and performing multiple general office duties, including resource assistant. Volunteering was so much fun that she decided to obtain more education in a field that allowed her to serve others. With that in mind, Yudell completed a bachelor of science degree in health education/health fitness and lifestyle management – still continuing to volunteer in the community, at the resource center and in her children's schools.

Yudell immediately put her education to use as an employee fitness coordinator for a private company. The position, though paid, continued to allow Sonnie to do that which she loved, help people.

"I've always been interested in supporting group efforts," she said. "It's always been something that intrigued me."

Sonnie continued to excel both professionally and as a volunteer. With each new position and act of volunteerism she grew, gaining new skills, knowledge and resources. Yudell's volunteer efforts included involvement in Utah Issues, Utah Poverty Action Network, which provides education and advocacy for under- and uninsured- people and Utahns Against Hunger. She recently received the Community Innovation Award from the Division of Aging and Adult Services.

She also volunteered at IHC's inner-city health and assessment fairs; Utah Public Health Association; and, for the past 7 years, at the American Cancer Society.

"I had a knowledge base and I felt it was important to share with the rest of the community," Yudell said. "I like helping people. I know it sounds corny, but it's true."

Volunteerism not only enhanced Yudell's personal life. It has been a valuable career resource. Her continued voluntary efforts, contacts, time, enthusiasm and commitment to serve others resulted in great career achievements and advancements.

Sonnie has worked for state government 11 years, as a community health specialist for Utah Department of Health and now for Aging and Adult Services as the family caregiver support program specialist.

Yudell learned that Meals on Wheels needed volunteers in her current job, so she started helping. Thus, her mission continues. In the words of Gandhi, "The best way to find yourself, is to lose yourself in the service of others."

Yudell has clearly found herself. If you are interested in volunteering in Utah, you can contact Utah Commission on Volunteers, 1(888) 755-UTAH (8824) or look on the Internet at [www.utahpromise.org](http://www.utahpromise.org).

## Stephanie Ritter Is 'Child Advocate of the Year'

By Carol Sisco

### DHS Public Information

Stephanie Ritter does "the job no one wants to do, sees what no one wants to see and hears what many are too uncomfortable to hear," but she wouldn't trade it for anything.

The job description came from her boss, Troy Randall, when he learned she received the Child Advocate of the Year award from the Prevent Child Abuse Utah organization. Ritter has investigated sex abuse cases for three years for the Division of Child and Family Services in Tooele. Prior to that she worked for Utah Youth Village.

"Stephanie goes above and beyond trying to make sure that children and families feel like they have an advocate," Randall said. "Her efforts to partner with law enforcement and the local Children's Justice Center speak to her desire to make the children and families as comfortable as possible while still conducting a very professional interview."

Although several people nominated Stephanie for the award, she was happiest about the nomination from one of her clients.

"She believed her son was sexually abused by her husband and that he had threatened the little boy," Ritter said. "We did two interviews but he wouldn't talk. I got him into treatment for three months before he finally told me about it."

The mom was really glad that no one gave up on her or her son.

A six-year-old girl recently summed up why sex abuse investigations are so important.

"She gave a very detailed description about what happened," Ritter recalled. "Then she said 'this isn't a way to live. It is not a good way of life. I choose not to live it.'"

Another little girl was initially so frightened that she curled up in a ball and wouldn't say a word. Ritter waited a couple weeks then started stopping by to say "hi" and get to know her better. The little girl finally talked, still curled up in a ball.



**Stephanie Ritter**

"You have to be very careful with them so they won't get more distressed," she said. "You take your time."

One day the child talked then ran downstairs shouting: "Mommy, I so happy. I finally told." She visits Stephanie's office regularly to say hello and play Barbie's.

Ritter believes sex abuse is the worst type of abuse a child can suffer.

"It isn't just their physical well-being that is harmed," she said, "but emotionally too. It's a scar they'll always deal with. We can help them and at least we stop the abuse."

While stopping abuse is vital, preventing it from ever happening is even more important, Ritter believes

"Immediate protection for the child comes first," she said. "But overall you help the parents become healthy in their thinking patterns. If you can't help the family, you can't help the child."

Ritter is modest about the award that she dedicated to the kids she works with. She also invited her 15-year-old son, Casey, to the ceremony. "I couldn't have done it without him having the vision and insight and sacrificing so much time since he was 9."

## Georgia Baddley Believes In Making A Difference



**Georgia Baddley spends many hours volunteering at 10 Thousand Villages store**

**By Steve Wrigley, Disability Services**

"You can have an impact and make a difference," said Georgia Baddley Central Region Director for the Division of Services for People with Disabilities who volunteers more than 30 hours monthly as vice president of Salt Lake City's Ten Thousand Villages store.

Baddley lived in the Philippines as a teenager and saw people living in poverty with no way to make a living. She wanted to make a difference someday and help people support themselves in Third World countries.

"Two people coming together can make a difference to help people," said Baddley who worked with former DHS employee Denise Winslow to help support Third World artisans.

In the fall of 1998, Baddley and Winslow were on a business trip in Idaho when they walked by a

store full of unique gifts from around the world. The store manager shared the mission of Ten Thousand Villages and informed them that, as a non-profit organization, these stores depend heavily on volunteer assistance. Ten Thousand Villages stores are in business to benefit Third World artisans, not retailers or wholesalers.

Intrigued by what they learned and wanting to join a worthy cause, they returned to Utah and began to organize and share their vision of a local store. They opened the doors for business in 1999 with the help of friends and volunteers. With a staff of over 70 volunteers, in three short years the Salt Lake City store has become one of the top 10 in the nation. They estimate that sales support over 300 artisans and their families.

Baddley believes we have a responsibility to give back to our communities. Part of the mission of Ten Thousand Villages is to provide community education about other countries and their cultures.

## Volunteers: People Helping People

They give community presentations to schools and community groups, provide a summer program for 50 kids and work with more than 75 youth from the Boys and Girls Clubs weekly during the summer.

"We have no understanding of poverty if we have not seen other people in other countries who have absolutely nothing," Baddley said.

Baddley's childhood dream has become reality as Ten Thousands Villages provides people from Third World countries with an opportunity to rise out of poverty and provide a better life and future for their families.



## Eldon Gale Named 'Mentor of Year'

**By Jeanne Lund, Youth Corrections**

ELDON GALE - Mentor of the Year. It sounds like a big deal and it is. Each April, the Utah Mentor Partnership chooses four Mentors of the Year from statewide chapters. The Utah Mentor Partnership is a non-profit, grass roots coalition of volunteer programs, local businesses and organizations committed to providing mentors to people in need. Nominees are some of the greatest volunteers in Utah.

Eldon was chosen as the Salt Lake area mentor. He volunteers at Genesis Youth Center, a work camp program in the Division of Youth Corrections.

"Eldon has donated well over 1,100 hours of volunteer service to Genesis," according to his nomination written by Genesis Counselor Chris Roach. "He is a great asset and resource for the youth in our program. He not only conducts himself in a professional and efficient manner, but he is a wonderful educator. Eldon discovers the youth's career interests and gathers information concerning that vocation or profession. Eldon also coordinates guest speakers with specific expertise in a particular area of interest that a resident may have. He provides an empowering approach to educating residents. Eldon is positive, creative and a lot of fun to work with. He has truly made Genesis Youth Center a better place."

Gale and another volunteer, Melissa Miller, also spend extra time working with female residents on essential workplace skills. They do mock interviews, visit Workforce Services, prepare resumes and learn basic life skills. Once a month he invites a female guest speaker to talk about what makes her feel successful. He is dedicated and truly cares about the youth in Genesis.

Awards were presented in the Capitol's Gold Room with both the Gov. Mike Leavitt and Attorney General Mark Shurtleff present. Gov. Leavitt presented Eldon and the other recipients with plaques. In a special show of appreciation, the

youth Eldon spends time with at Genesis were allowed to attend.

When asked why he volunteers, Eldon cited examples including his parents, his church which encourages service and the ideas his parents instilled on community, families caring for one another and helping others without compensation.

Eldon also talked about how much he likes the Genesis work program and what it stands for. "I like the idea of the youth working off what they owe the court and the community," he said.

---

### 'Techie' Brian Whitesides...

Continued from page 3  
about missing database files on the office's shared network drive.

"They look like they are there, but they won't open up" Bettinson explained.

After further questioning, Whitesides concludes the files were corrupted. He decides the best way to resolve the issue is to restore the files from a backup tape created the night before for all network files.

He disappears into the server room and returns a few minutes later. "Just a simple file restore," he said modestly. Whitesides then calls Bettinson back to verify the files are back and offers tips to keep the problem from reoccurring.

"Brian is a lifesaver," Bettinson said later, still clearly relieved that days of work were saved. Ray Winger, a co-worker, readily agrees and adds, "not only did he fix the problem, but he took the time to explain the cause, and let us know how to prevent the problem in the future."

"That," Winger says with a pause, "is what I call service."

Whitesides quietly accepts the praise, but has other things on his mind. He's off to see the DCFS Director Richard Anderson who is having printer problems.

## Youth Corrections Kids Clean Up Parkway

**By Paul Morrison**  
**Youth Corrections**

The Office of Early Intervention's Salt Lake TASC Work Program was invited to participate in the "Take Pride in Utah" month kick off project in May at the Kearn's Olympic Skating Oval.

TASC is the Teen Alternative to Secure Care program run by the Division of Youth Corrections.

The opening ceremony was held in the north parking lot of Kearns High School. Several state and community leaders were present to support and promote this worthy project. Gov. Mike Leavitt arrived at 8 a.m. to offer a few words, set the standard and show his support of this important endeavor. Gov. Leavitt got things started by helping the kids plant a tree.

Our group was assigned to help prepare sites for planting trees, weed the parkway and remove trash. Tony Gallegos, Mike Dawes, Siosifa Tafisi and Jerry Eversole worked alongside 23 clients.

Gov. Leavitt put on his gloves and joined our group in pulling weeds. In-between weeds, the governor shook hands with each client. Many of our clients did not know who he was. This experience turned out to be a great civics lesson as well as modeling the importance of everyone taking responsibility, including the Governor, in doing their share in keeping Utah beautiful.

Rep. Eric K. Hutchings and his wife and our group remained at the project on a very cold, windy day, until the work was completed. They spent more than four hours finishing the parkway beautification.

## New Tool Helps People Find Services They Need

A new tool to help customers find services they need and assist in determining what benefits they're eligible for will be on-line soon. eREP, or the Electronic Resource and Eligibility Product, is a joint project from the departments of Human Services, Health and Workforce Services.

The program's first phase is an electronic screening and referral system. Employees, or potential clients, will be able to find all types of services in the new system. A client, or employee, answers a few questions about what they need. The system will then search for services available in the area where the person lives.

People may need emergency food, help with rent, counseling, all kinds of things. Services listed generally will be from state agencies or private, non-profit groups that are approved by local Information and Referral programs. The referral system should be available by late October.

The whole idea is to help people find state programs and community services that help them with current needs. The project is one element in Gov. Mike Leavitt's 1000-Day Plan to make government available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and 365 days a year.

If you want to learn more about eREP, go to <http://erep.innerweb.utah.gov> or email [erepinfo@utah.gov](mailto:erepinfo@utah.gov).

## The Human Touch

Published by Utah Department of Human Services

**Robin Arnold-Williams**  
**Executive Director**

Edited by Carol Sisco, 120 N. 200 West,  
#319, Salt Lake City, Utah 84103.

Articles or ideas welcome. Email  
[csisco@utah.gov](mailto:csisco@utah.gov), FAX (801) 538-4016 or call  
(801) 538-3991.